growing demand for industrial goods and services in the Indian economy;

(b) if so, whether Government are thinking of any specific measures, to increase agricultural growth by adopting composite measures like R&D inputs, high-yielding variety seeds, improved irrigation facilities, easy availability of mechanical aids for agricultural operations, low-interest rate finance, etc.; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof and the likely percentage of growth through application of such measures?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government is making concerted effort to increase agricultural growth by implementing various Central and Centrally Sponsored Schemes with the objective to extend irrigation facilities, enhance input availability including seeds, organic and inorganic fertilizers, farm equipment, chemical and bio pesticides, agricultural credit and also managerial and technical skills.

(c) Under perspective and Annual Plans, targets are fixed for Crop Production and accordingly action plans are formulated to achieve the targets. The National Agriculture Policy has laid 4% plus annual growth target for the next two decades.

Sufferings of cotton growers

629. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that cotton growers of Punjab had been suffering crop failure for the past many years, which have rendered them penniless and even forced them to end their lives;

(b) whether it is also a fact that cotton growers in many cotton producing areas of Punjab have been struck by the dreaded American Boll Worm (Heliothis disease); and

(c) if so, what steps have been taken by Government to remove the sufferings of the cotton growers especially of Punjab?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) The cotton growers in Punjab have suffered losses due to attack of various pests, particularly the American Boll Worm during the last few years.

(b) Yes, Sir. The cotton crop in the States of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan have suffered losses on account of attack of American boll worm. The early onset of the rains in the month of May and June 2001 led to early buildup of pest. Subsequent intermittent rains and cloudy weather helped further multiplication of pest and hindered the spray operations, causing damage to cotton.

(c) Both the Central and State Governments sent teams to survey the extent of damage to the cotton crop.

The States took suitable measures for the control of pest by guiding farmers for the appropriate use of pesticides, checking quality of pesticides, distribution of leaflets, organizing kisan goshties etc.

Farmers are compensated under National Agricultural Insurance Scheme for crop losses and those farmers who have insured their crop are provided compensation as per the rules/norms. However, the State of Punjab is not covered under the scheme as the state has not opted for the insurance scheme.

Salary without work at fertilizer plant in Gorakhpur

†630. SHRI GANDHI AZAD: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that fertilizer plant in Gorakhpur is closed and its employees are being paid salary without any work;

(b) the details of amount being spent annually towards salary, etc. of the employees;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.